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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S KAMANA MATHUR
STATE FOR INR/AA RITA BYRNES
STATE FOR AF/RSA MIKE BITTRICK
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SUBJECT: MALAWI HAS MADE DECISION TO GO TO SOMALIA, BUT NEEDS
EQUIPMENT

REF: (A) STATE 5683, (B) LILONGWE 28

1.(SBU) Summary: Ambassador Eastham met with Minister of Defense Davies Katsonga on January 19 to discuss possible Malawian involvement in an AU mission to Somalia and deliver reftel A talking points. Katsonga said that Malawi has, "made a decision to go to Somalia, however, we still need equipment," hence the GOM does not plan on making an official announcement regarding their plans until January 26 at the earliest. Katsonga confirmed that Malawi's contribution would be a battalion sized force, which he defined as "600-800 soldiers." END SUMMARYQ

12. (SBU) Katsonga said that while Malawi is "almost prepared," they are still making arrangements on equipment, and are specifically focused on vehicles for the mission. Despite what Mission officials were told by the Malawi Defense Force (MDF) last week regarding the AU contribution of Armored Personnel Carriers (reftel B), Katsonga said that they did not currently have a commitment from the AU to provide APCs. Katsonga went on to state that the MOD's principal secretary is traveling to South Africa on January 20 to negotiate

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prices on APCs and other vehicles to be used in the mission.

13. (SBU) According to the MOD, the MDF currently needs the following equipment, which they expect to cost a total of slightly more than US \$10 million:

12 APCs Wheeled
1 APC Wheeled Ambulance
1 Heavy Duty Recovery Vehicle
1 APC Wheeled Command Signals Vehicle
1 APC Wheeled Fuel Tanker
1 APC Wheeled Water Bowzer
1 Refrigeration Van
1 Generator Set (75-80 Kva)
1 Water Purification Unit
1 Workshop Repair Trailer
Battalion Tentage
General Stores
G 109/8 Stores
Vehicle Workshop Tools
Medical Supplies
Rations for 3 Months

14. (SBU) Though it is unclear what financial resources the GOM will

be able to devote to the mission, the MDF would at the least be dependant on other resources for logistical transport. This might possibly include the collection of APCs from South Africa, if the MOD moves forward with their purchase. Katsonga asked for more information regarding what type of logistical assistance the U.S. is planning to provide to Uganda.

¶5. (SBU) Katsonga promised to meet again with Ambassador Eastham after his PS returns from South Africa on January 25. He also said he would send over the MDF's complete list of the specific supplies/equipment that they will need to join the mission.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Katsonga made it clear that the GOM is planning to join the mission to Somalia, however they are currently trying to nail down the equipment details. Without a clear answer to the APC question, which has always been the major obstacle to greater Malawian involvement abroad, it is difficult to know how close Malawi is to making a full commitment. The Mission would appreciate any additional information regarding the AU's offer of APCs to force contributors, as well as any further guidance as to what type of resources might be available to assist MalaWi with force preparation. End Comment.

EASTHAM